Mr. K. M. Ibrahim (*Cranganur*). How was the Member for Medicine able to know that we are over-represented? The Government were saying that they can't ascertain the number due to the immense labour involved in the collection of statistics.

Mr. President : That is the general impression.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim (*Cranganur*): Sometimes general impression becomes faulty.

SHORNUR-COCHIN RAILWAY - PURCHASE OF TIMBER FOR REPAIRS, ETC.

158. Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar (*Nellayi*) : Will the Gover ment be pleased to state :—

(*a*) the amount spent by the S. I. R. for the renewal and repair of sleepers and other wooden materials on the Shornur-Cochin Railway, during the last two years ;

(*b*) the quantity of timber purchased by the Railway Company from the Cochin Government for the above purpose?

Mr. K. P. Kannan Nayar (*Secretary to Government*):

(*a*) 1936—37 .... Rs. 56,594
1937—38 .... ,, 80,134

(*b*) Nil.

Mr. T. V. Subramania Ayyar (*Nemmara*) : In view of the fact that the whole railway line belongs to the Government, can't they consider the desirability of the S. I. R. purchasing timber from our own forests which is inferior to no other timber ?

Mr. K. P. Kannan Nayar (*Secretary to Government*): In fact most of the timber used for sleepers in our line is from the Cochin forests. But the thing is, we do not supply them direct. They call for tenders and entrust the supply to the lowest tenderer. The contractors get their supply from our own forests.

Mr. T. Narayana Menon (*Conservator of Forests*) : As the Secretary to Government has said, we are supplying most of the timber used for the sleepers. As a matter of fact, it is found to be economical to supply it through the contractors than supplying it direct.

Mr. T. V. Subramania Ayyar (*Nemmara*): Am I to understand that the method of supplying directly is dis-advantageous than supplying through the contractors ?

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Mr. T. Narayana Menon (*Conservator of Forests*): It is so.

Mr. President: It costs more to make the supply available through the Government Agency than through the contractors.

Mr. T. V. Subramania Ayyar (*Nemmara*): But we can avoid the middleman, if we are to supply direct.

LEPERS AND BEGGARS—CONGREGATION OF.

159. Mr. A. V. Moothedan (*Chalakkudi*): Will the Government be pleased to state:—

(*a*) whether they are aware of the annoyance and even danger to the public caused by the lepers and beggars collecting together in front of the Ernakulam Archbishop's House, Malabar Mail Office and the surroundings;

(*b*) has the Ernakulam Municipality done anything in the matter?

Mr. P. J. George (*Joint Secretary to Government*): (*a*) Beggars generally collect at the places specified. Government are not aware that there are lepers among them.

(*b*) Lepers found in the streets are sent to the Leper Asylum as far as accommodation admits. The Ernakulam Municipality has provided a Poor House where disabled beggars are admitted and cared for.

Mr. K. R. Viswambharan (*Ezhuvas-Talappalli*): Has there been any serious attempt to put the Leper Act into operation in the Ernakulam Town?

Mr. P. J. George (*Joint Secretary to Government*): It is in force not only in Ernakulam town, but throughout the whole State.

Mr. K. R. Viswambharan (*Ezhuvas-Talappalli*): Has the Leper Act been brought into operation throughout the whole State?

Mr. P. J. George (*Joint Secretary to Government*): Yes.

Mr. C. R. Iyyunni (*Trichur-South*): Does it mean that all the lepers found wandering in the streets and by the side of houses, are housed in the Leper Asylum?

Dr. D. Raghavendra Rao (*Chief Medical Officer*): It does not mean that. The attempt made is to segregate these lepers and send them to places such as Leper Asylums

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